

JOIN HANDS FOR CHILDREN
MINUTES FROM CHILD WELFARE TRANSFORMATION DESIGN COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 20, 2011

Members Present: Asst. Secretary Denise Revels Robinson; Judge Leonard Costello; Gwendolyn Gua; Jerry Meninick; Mary Meinig; Sheila Huber; Ken Nichols; Benjamin de Haan; Frederick Hayes; Catherine Lanham; Sharon Osborne; Gwendolyn Lawson Townsend; Nancy Sutton; Jeannie McShane; Nancy Foll;

Staff Present: Benjamin Berres, Melissa Takade, and Marie Bolstad, Partners for Our Children; Tammy Cordova, Becky Smith, David del Villar Fox, Rich Pannkuk, Nancy Dufraine, DSHS Children's Administration; Colleen Cawston, Department of Social and Health Services

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Overview

Judge Leonard Costello, Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee (CWTDC) co-chair, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the ground rules, offered updates and asked for committee members to introduce themselves. After introductions, he gave an overview of the meeting's agenda and described the first item on the agenda, a short presentation on the DSHS Regional Consolidation effort. Before launching into the first presentation, he took a moment to announce some staffing changes to the committee: Julie Dunnington would no longer be serving the CWTDC because she had left Partners for Our Children (POC) and Ben Berres would assume her responsibilities; Melissa Takade would also be leaving the CWTDC and Marie Bolstad would be assuming her responsibilities. He announced that the audio and the minutes of the meeting's discussion would be posted on the internet the following week.

Overview of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Regional Consolidation

Nancy Sutton, Regional Administrator for current Region 5, and future (as of May 1, 2011) Region 3, and Becky Smith, Director of Children's Administration Field Operations Division gave an overview of DSHS' Regional Consolidation. They reviewed how this consolidation will affect regional and HQ staffing. This consolidation will go into full effect on May 1.

Gwen Gua asked about what Children's Administration is doing to coordinate and communicate with the Tribes about the consolidation. She also asked how this change would affect the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR). Nancy Sutton responded to the first question about outreach to Tribes. She claimed that Children's Administration officials will be meeting with every Tribe and that effort is already underway. Jeanie McShane, Director of DLR, said that there would be fewer changes with regard to DLR. Asst. Secretary Denise Revels Robinson added that all the newly appointed Regional Administrators met with the Executive Leadership team of the Indian Policy Advisory Committee.

Nancy Foll was curious how these changes will ripple down to the communities. She asked if there is a comprehensive document that describes these changes and if it could be posted to the website. Asst. Secretary Revels Robinson commented that there was a document that describes this effort for the entire Department. It will be posted to the Join Hands for Children website.

Sharon Osborne asked whether there has been any analysis on whether there can be any alignment of the consolidation of regions and the implementation of PBC. She requested that this could be discussed at a later date at another meeting.

Legislative Update

David Del Villar Fox, Children's Administration's Legislative Liaison, gave an update on all the bills in the legislature that would bear an impact on Children's Administration. This list is available on a matrix in the supplemental materials. Since session had yet to conclude at the time this presentation was given, many of the bills were not finalized.

Mary Meinig asked whether SB 5656 would have time to pass out of the legislature. David Del Villar Fox said that it does.

Judge Leonard Costello asked if there was any indication from the Governor's office about any potential vetoes. David Del Villar Fox said that there may be a couple partial vetoes but it is unlikely there will be any full vetoes.

Sharon Osborne asked about the fiscal impact of the B&O tax bill. David Del Villar Fox added that the fiscal impact would be lost projected revenue, not based on historical tax generation.

Update on Tribes and Performance Based Contracting

Colleen Cawston, Senior Director of Indian Policy for DSHS, gave an update on how Washington State Tribes will be engaged in the performance-based contracting process. She described a matrix that depicts how each Tribe has expressed how they would like to work with the state going forward.

Nancy Foll asked about whether the funds that are allocated to Tribes to provide services are counted within the funds currently available for the overall 2106 transformation. Rich Pannkuk, Director of Finance and Operation support for Children's Administration, said that this funding has been held aside and is in a pool for Tribes as the process move forward. Incidentally, he added, the funding for Lead Agencies may grow. This question will be posted to the DSHS procurements website.

When this presentation was over, the committee took a brief break.

Children's Administration Budget Update

When the committee reconvened after break, Rich Pannkuk gave an update on the budget status. He gave an overview on the House Proposed budget and the Senate Proposed Budget.

Committee members asked about the risk reserve cash pool. Rich Pannkuk guessed that the risk reserve was allocated for the biennium.

Update on RFP and Review of Pertinent Timelines

Tammy Cordova, Director of the Children's Administration Program and Practice Improvement Division, gave an update on the status of the Request for Proposal for Performance Based Contracts.

Gwendolyn Gua asked if there is a schedule published for May for the proposal readers. Tammy Cordova replied that that information would be sent out shortly.

Judge Leonard Costello asked when the proposals would be available for the public to inspect. Tammy Cordova replied that she did not believe that they would be available until they have been reviewed and a contract has been executed. Judge Leonard Costello asked what would happen if contracts cannot be executed after the two weeks that are allotted for contracts negotiation had elapsed. Then, he asked if, when contracts could not be executed, would subsequent deadlines be affected, notably the point in time when Lead Agencies will be expected to begin serving children. Tammy Cordova replied that those deadlines would be affected.

Gwendolyn Gua asked how the DSHS regional reconfiguration would affect the overall number of Lead Agencies. She also asked if the potential responders have been notified. Tammy Cordova said that the RFP does address the number of regions for which Children's Administration will be contracting. Asst. Secretary Denise Revels Robinson said that this question will be posted to the DSHS procurements website. As a caveat, Tammy Cordova added that any answers given today are not binding and official until they have been posted to the procurements website.

Nancy Foll asked if there is a contingency plan for if Children's Administration is unable to contract for a specified region. In other words, "what is the back-up plan?" Asst. Secretary Revels Robinson said that the back-up plan depends on the specific issue. Gwendolyn Lawson Townsend asked why Children's Administration can't discuss this issue. Asst. Secretary Revels Robinson said that Children's Administration cannot discuss issues like this with potential responders, but if a written question were to be submitted, then Children's Administration would try and answer. She continued on to say that Children's Administration has considered a number of contingencies but is not comfortable discussing these details at this juncture.

Public Comment:

Dan Evans, Director of Information Services for Lutheran Community Services Northwest, was the only audience member who spoke. Before he started he explained that he only had a couple comments and didn't expect any answers. He said that he was at the meeting to speak on behalf of Lutheran Community Services' head officer Roberta Nestaas. His first point concerned that all the data released to providers had been posted since Children's Administration has had to be more cautious about answering questions. "In some ways," he said, "the data has raised more questions than [LCS] had before." LCS's questions regarding the data pertain to drops in caseload as well as what Children's Administration is reporting as the costs for services. He also said that LCS is concerned about whether there are any start-up dollars. He thanked the CWTDC for the opportunity to speak.

Closing

Judge Leonard Costello thanked the committee members for attending and called the meeting to a close.